

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

If a tracking pattern superimposed on print data  
is discriminated, a malicious user may tamper the  
pattern, resulting in a deterioration in the reliability  
5 of the tracking pattern itself. According to this  
invention, therefore, a tracking pattern generating unit  
generates a tracking pattern, and a data addition  
processing unit adds the tracking pattern to image data.  
An encryption processing unit encrypts the image data to  
10 which the tracking pattern is added to make it difficult  
to detect that the tracking pattern is added, and  
transmits the resultant data to a printing apparatus.  
This makes it difficult to discriminate the tracking  
pattern from the image data, thus providing the highly  
15 reliable tracking pattern.